

Message

What you need to know to start your day.

From: Bloomberg
Environment -
Environment & Energy
Report
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To: Duffy, Rick
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Subject: First Move: Senate
Talks Climate •
Methane Leak Case •
N.Y. Climate Democrat
Who Isn't AOC

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Senate Talks Climate • Methane Leak Case • N.Y. Climate Democrat Who Isn't AOC



By [Chuck McCutcheon](#)

Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and West Virginia's Joe Manchin are among the Senate's most avid fossil-fuel backers—but both also say they care about climate change.

That's why the Senate energy committee today is holding its first hearing on the topic in seven years.

Murkowski, who chairs the committee, and Manchin, its top Democrat, are focusing on how the electricity sector should respond to accelerating changes in climate.

Witnesses include Lisa Jacobson, president of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy; Joseph Kelliher, NextEra Energy's executive vice president for federal regulatory affairs; and Sue Tierney of the Denver-based consulting firm the Analysis Group.

Tierney will tell senators that the committee is well positioned to help the U.S. raise its near-term climate ambition because of the panel's jurisdiction over the Energy Department's research and development activities, according to her written testimony. She will urge senators to look at a wide set of technology solutions.

METHANE LEAK CASE: The largest U.S. methane leak cost businesses millions of dollars. Now those businesses want California's Supreme Court to clear the way for their lawsuit seeking recovery.

The court, for the first time, will hear arguments today in a case will address whether a company responsible for an environmental disaster has a duty not to inflict economic loss on its neighbors when the loss arises from an environmental disaster, rather than from a contract.

"This was not the first human-caused disaster and it will not be the last," attorneys for the businesses said in a legal brief.

The 2015 blowout at the Southern California Gas Co.-owned Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Storage Facility spewed more than 5 billion cubic feet of methane and other chemicals over four months, leading to evacuations and lost business.

OTHER STORIES WE'RE COVERING

- The head of Illinois medical sterilizer Sterigenics U.S. LLC has had at least half a dozen conversations with the EPA's top air official, as the agency considers tougher standards for ethylene oxide, a carcinogenic chemical.
- The Senate environment panel's air quality subcommittee looks at states' roles in protecting air quality, with officials from Arkansas, California, and North Dakota appearing.
- Rick Perry holds his first meeting of his Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, led by Vicki Hollub, Occidental Petroleum's president and CEO.
- EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and other agency officials will hold a teleconference on the release of the 2017 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis.

- The House will vote on a bill to better document the cause of death of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who inhaled fumes from open burn pits. Lawmakers will also vote to require the Energy Department to create a clearinghouse that would help schools find information on federal energy efficiency, small-scale energy generation, and retrofitting programs; to authorize \$75 million annually for a nuclear waste remediation site in New York; and to allow a Colorado uranium disposal site to continue operations through September 2031.
- A bill that would usher in a sweeping overhaul of Colorado's system of regulating the state's oil and gas industry will get its first hearing in a state legislative committee.
- S&P Global Market Intelligence holds its 32nd annual Power and Gas M&A Symposium in New York.
- Several environmental groups are announcing a set of management practices they want offshore wind developers to use to protect the North Atlantic right whale.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

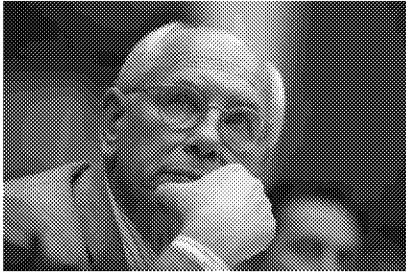
"If you would need to drink over 140 glasses of wine in one day to even hit the tolerance limit for glyphosate, I think you would have much bigger problems to worry about than the pesticide."

—Alexandra Dunn, head of EPA's chemical safety office, discussing the need for her employees to better communicate that small amounts of pesticides in food and drinks don't pose significant health risks.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TONKO HAS HAND IN MULTIPLE DEBATES

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez isn't the only House Democrat from New York with big climate and energy plans.

Rep. Paul Tonko, who represents the Albany and Schenectady region, chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee's environment and climate change panel. The former engineer and chief executive officer of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority is also a member of the Natural Resources and Science, Space and Technology committees.



Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.).
Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Tonko envisions first a near-term emphasis on energy efficiency incentives and performance standards, expanding the federal Weatherization Assistance Program, modernizing the nation's electric grid, electrification of transportation, and similar technology-enabled solutions.

Then he wants to undertake a longer-term focus on comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation, including carbon pricing.

At the same time, his panel plans to dig into the Trump administration actions on chemicals, autos, air, and other environment-related issues.

"We're going to want answers, and we're going to respect science," he said. "It can't be about creating your own set of facts."

AROUND THE WEB

- Patagonia [hires](#) former EPA general counsel Avi Garbow as its environmental advocate.
- Chemical pollutants found in the homes and diets of humans and dogs [have the same adverse effects](#) on male fertility, a new study says.
- Ohio GOP Gov. Mike DeWine is expected to use his first State of the State speech today to discuss his call for [an 18-cent increase](#) in the state's gas tax.

TODAY'S EVENTS

- **All Day • Energy** • Energy Trading Institute [holds](#) its annual conference on trading and regulatory issues featuring Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner Bernard McNamee.
- **9 a.m. • Mexico** • Wilson Center [hosts discussion](#) on Mexico's energy reform under a new Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador administration.

- **10 a.m. • Defense/Energy** • Information Technology and Innovation Foundation [sponsors forum](#) on the military's investment in energy innovation.
- **10 a.m. • Hurricanes** • Gerry Bell, a hurricane forecaster with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology disaster resilience scientist Jeremy Gregory [discuss](#) the impacts of the 2018 season and the status of the 2017 season rebuilding effort.
- **11:30 a.m. • Sustainability** • POLITICO [hosts event](#) on sustainable environmental solutions featuring Michigan Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Maryland Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles.
- **Noon • Mining** • Several environmental groups including Earthjustice [hold briefing](#) on 1872 mining law.
- **12:30 p.m. • Climate** • Johns Hopkins' energy center [holds forum](#) on a new analytical approach to integrate sub-national climate commitments to assess impacts.
- **1 p.m. • Carbon** • U.S. Energy Association [hosts briefing](#) on large scale utilization of carbon dioxide by the construction sector through carbon dioxide mineralization.
- **1:15 p.m. • Wind** • American Wind Energy Association holds "[Wind Power on Capitol Hill](#)" forum featuring Colorado GOP Sen. Cory Gardner and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).
- **2 p.m. • Electrification** • Environmental and Energy Study Institute [looks at](#) electrification options for consumers and the environment.

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